

# BMHA Newsletter

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA



Volume 9, Number 3

Jul/Aug/Sep 1998

## HAMVENTION '98

### *Ninth Forum Big Success!*

This year's BMHA Forum at Dayton was a smashing success. The over 60 people in the audience were "hanging on every word" from our two featured speakers: Mark Campbell, KE0KC, who spoke on "Organizing a Bike Event—The Easy way", and Scott Farrell, KE4WMF, who showed and explained how he put together his now-famous Mountain Bike Super Ham Station. In between times our Moderator, Chris Charron, KOPE, kept us informed and entertained.

In spite of the early hour, 8:45 on Sunday morning, over 60 hams attended our forum. Of the 56 who signed the sign-up sheet, 20 were members and 36 non-members. To date, of those 36, seven have become members—a very satisfying result. See you there next year!

—Hartley Alley, NAOA

### *Seventh Annual BMHA Bike Ride*

Once again, the BMHA Ride on HamVention Saturday, May 16th, featured beautiful weather. The cloudless skies and the temperatures in the 80's no doubt helped attract a record number of BMHAers from across the country to our gathering in Tipp City, Ohio. This year's winner of the "I came the farthest to the BMHA ride" T-shirt presented by our friends at Tipp Cyclery was Marcie Stilwell, KC7DAT, of Poulso, WA. From the East Coast, Scott Farrell, KE4WMF, brought his radio-equipped mountain bike which was featured in CQ-VHF magazine, and in the BMHA forum at the HamVention.



Fifteen riders, most with radio-equipped bikes, took part in the ride—a leisurely 28 miles with a mid-ride refreshment stop.

Among those who came by to socialize with their fellow BMHAers were our fearless leader Hartley Alley, NAOA, and his wife Jean, N0EOX. We also had a SAG vehicle, driven by Donald Stahlbaum, KC8HVQ, following us on the route. Hearing "car passing" on our 2m frequency (from

the vehicle itself!) as Don went around us, was truly a unique experience. With a combination of ham-equipped riders and some local bikers from the Dayton Cycling Club, we were able to keep track of everyone no matter how spread-out our riders were.

I'd like to thank the Miami County ARC for the use of the W8FW repeater, Tipp Cyclery for rental bikes and prizes, and of course everyone who came to the ride.

—Jim Gumbert, NC8Y

419 S. Third St.

Tipp City, OH 45371 E-mail: otown@infinet.com

## NOTEPAD

### *New Members Keep Coming Onboard*

You'll note (p. 5) that since the last issue of the BMHA Newsletter we have gained 30 members. Ten of them came in as a result of the recent articles by our members in CQ-VHF Magazine; seven joined at our Forum at the Dayton HamVention; four came from our classified ad that runs in QST Magazine; the rest came from various sources, including plugs from our long-time members. Keep up the good work!

Typical of the publicity that has been bringing in new members is Bill Sharp's (W8HI) article titled *How to Wire a Bike for Ham Radio*, in the May issue of CQ-VHF Magazine.

In an E-Mail to me, Bill jokes about the thrill of seeing his words printed in a magazine for the first time: "I'd like to talk longer but I'm signing autographs at Barnes and Noble for the next few days. (I stop people as they come in the door, show them the magazine and ask them if they want to buy it and then I assure them I'll autograph it.) That's the way it's done, isn't it? Or do I need an agent now?" Waytago, Bill!

### *Guidebooks Still Selling Nicely*

At our HamVention Forum we sold 33 Guidebooks. I refer to the two booklets written by Dave Gerbig, WB9MZL, titled *Radio Operator's Guidebook* and *Tour Leader's Guidebook*. These booklets, \$2 each postpaid, tell how ham operators can provide communication support for bicycle events.

### *Hospitality List*

As you remember, in the last issue, page 7, we listed two members who happily provide overnight accommodations for BMHA members who are bicycling touring. We're pleased to add to the list Cathy Crandall, AA7GX, and George Mortimer, of 3200 West Champagne Drive, Tucson, AZ 85745. Phone: (520)624-8680. E-mail: CCrandall@TucsonElectric.com

—Hartley Alley, NAOA, Editor E-mail: hartleyal@aol.com

# PUBLIC SERVICE

## *Anatomy of an Accident*

It was the last day of the Michigander Tour (see p.2 of the Jan. '98 issue) and those of us who had survived the week, were in a good mood. The day had started with a chill in the air and a gray sky, but, by the time we reached the first SAG stop, the sky was clear blue and the temperature was ideal. The rural road was smooth and the hills were rolling. Everyone was looking forward to the end-of-the-ride party. There was no reason to suspect that tragedy lay just ahead.

I stopped at the first SAG to check in with the staff and fill my water bottle. I noticed that Karen, KC8EKM, the automobile Paramedic, had arrived. After speaking with her briefly, I headed down the road. A few easy miles later I came to a dangerous-looking hill—long and steep. (Later I learned that some riders were hitting 50 MPH on this downgrade.) Upon rounding the second turn of the sweeping S curve at the bottom, I saw a woman standing in the middle of the road, and a scene of panic and confusion. She flagged me down and reported that there had been an accident.

### *Rider Down!*

There was a rider face down on the left berm of the road and the person kneeling next to him was imploring him to stay alive. The accident must have just happened, because there were only a few people on the scene, mostly the victim's riding companions: his adult son and four or five friends. I stopped across the road from the victim, and, still on the bike, attempted to break into the busy Cadillac repeater, but couldn't make it. I then switched to my high power battery and to the Traverse City repeater, which also had traffic. I called "break, break, break" at the first opportunity and got right in. Fortunately the tour Net Control, Craig, N8VIP, monitors the repeaters at both ends of each day's route. I told him that there was a rider down about 18 miles into the route, it didn't look good and he would need an ambulance. Craig asked what page I was on in the map book, and asked that I determine the condition of the victim and get his rider number from his fanny flag. He also restricted the net and repeaters to priority traffic.

After handing my map book to a bystander to check the location, I crossed the road and looked for the fanny flag, but couldn't find it (he didn't have it with him). By this time a nurse, who happened to be on the tour, had arrived; she asked if I had a towel. I didn't, but I did have a new cloth diaper. A second nurse, who lived in a nearby farm house, arrived a short time later. The victim stopped breathing at least three times and the nurses had to stimulate him to breathe, due to his head injuries.

### *Hams Go Into Action*

I returned to my bike and as I started to call Net Control, a panicked rider (I assumed he was a member of the victim's group) tried to take over my radio. I told him I needed his help to double-check everything I reported for errors. This seemed to satisfy him. I also assigned another bystander to get the diaper from my rack-pack and deliver it to the nurse.

I called Net Control, Craig, and gave him the precise location, making a mistake and being corrected by the formerly panicked rider, who was doing his assigned job. Craig then dialed 911 on the patch and requested an ambulance. A Medivac helicopter was requested later, but unavailable. When the

dispatcher asked the victim's condition, Craig had me give the report: "possible foaming at the mouth, appears to be unconscious and is bleeding from both ears". When Karen, KC8EKM, the Paramedic, (still back at SAG 1) heard my report, she immediately recognized the bleeding as indicative of serious brain injury, so she jumped in her car and sped to the scene, parking her car in a manner as to protect the victim from oncoming traffic.

### *Paramedic Takes Over*

Here is an excerpt from Paramedic Karen's report: "I quickly grabbed for his head to gain what is called C-Spine control—maintaining the upper spine in natural alignment and minimizing movement and, hopefully, further damage. A rule in EMS is that once C-Spine control has been assumed, you cannot let go until the patient is either secured to a backboard, or they get up and refuse treatment. Doing so is inviting a malpractice lawsuit, so I was stuck unless someone else could take over holding his head correctly. A quick question revealed that no one there had any idea what I was talking about, so I proceeded to try to direct bystanders in helping me. I had to bark at the nurse to stop shaking him, telling her to use another method of stimulation that would not jostle him so much. I asked another bystander to get my CPR shield out in case we had to take over the chore of breathing for him. Now, I am kneeling at the patient's head, holding it in my latex gloved hands as blood trickled over my fingers, and pushing his jaw forward with two fingers to lift his tongue off the back of his throat and keep his airway clear".

It wasn't long before we could hear sirens in the distance. About this time a car came speeding into the scene. Three of the panicked riders flagged the driver down and proceeded to threaten to pull him out of the car and beat him up. I told them I would deal with the driver. I was wearing a volunteer-staff t-shirt—I guess that made me the authority figure, because they left. I stuck my head in the driver's face to smell for alcohol and noticed a cup of hot coffee between his legs. I asked him to drive carefully, mindful of the riders up ahead. His response was that he was late for work. I pointed to the victim and asked if he wanted something like that on his conscience, or would he prefer to be late. He said he would be careful and went on his way, slowly.

### *I Get The Finger*

Shortly before the two ambulances and two Sheriffs' cars arrived, one of the riders directing traffic asked if I could do anything to slow the riders who were speeding down the hill into the accident scene, so I started back up the hill. I encountered one of the tour bike mechanics coming down the hill with two or three sagged riders in her truck. I told them of the situation and they immediately began setting out bright orange water jugs as a warning.

About half way up the very long hill, I started trying to get the riders to slow down, with little response other than an occasional single finger salute. Apparently they thought I was just a safety nut. As I said before, riders later reported speeds of up to 50 mph. I asked Net Control to notify the SAG 1 staff to warn the riders, but no hams were there to receive the message. An ice cream delivery truck happened by, obviously headed for the country store where the first sag was located. I asked the driver to notify the sag staff to hold the riders there.

When the riders stopped coming, I went back down the hill. By then the victim was on his way to the hospital but there were still things to be done. Someone had found the victim's billfold so I was asked to take it, but fortunately a Deputy Sheriff stepped forward and offered to take it to the hospital, after verifying its contents as I witnessed. Some riders were too traumatized by the events to continue, so I asked Craig to arrange transportation for them. Craig then asked me to take over the net while he took a break. I was willing, but reluctant, as I was a bit "shook" myself. Fortunately, Keith, KB8SMZ, happened by and offered to take over.

Finally, I got back on my bike and rode faster than I thought possible—the adrenaline was still flowing. About halfway to the next sag, I noticed that I was bleeding. Apparently I had cut my leg on the crank when I first stopped and had been too busy to notice. I radioed ahead and notified the staff that I would be needing first aid.

### **Rider Hits Curve At 45mph**

The victim was Hal Read, who had been riding down the hill at over 45 mph when he encountered oncoming traffic on the curve and lost control while trying to get back in his lane. The oncoming truck driver did a great job of avoiding him, but Hal crashed on the left side of the road. He suffered a fractured skull, broken ribs, broken shoulder and collapsed lung. At last report he was making a slow but complete recovery. Hal was very fortunate. Not only did two nurses and the Paramedic arrive very quickly, but the rural, volunteer, ambulance staff was quick to the scene and an emergency room doctor on the tour came by just in time to ride in the ambulance with him. Without the help and co-operation of a lot of people who were not afraid to get involved, the outcome could have been very different.

Without amateur radio, the Paramedic wouldn't have been available and the ambulance would have been delayed. Once again hams came through!

—Ken Ratcliff, KB9MQT

501 E. University St. kenratcliff@juno.com  
Bloomington, IN 47401-2828

## **HINTS & TIPS**

### **Headset Adapts to Several Rigs**

If you'll look in the latest catalog from Performance Bike, you'll see an item called the Cyber Acoustics X-Link VOX. This is a helmet-mounted boom mike with earpiece that mounts like a 'third-eye' style mirror on the side of your helmet. The unit is intended as an accessory for the Motorola 'TalkAbout' Family Radio Service radios that they sell.

I have a pair of the TalkAbouts that I use with my kids during ski season and one of the nice things about them is the mike and earphone connections are compatible with Icom/Alinco/Radio Shack speaker/mikes! Therefore, this mike should also work with those radios.

While I haven't tried one to confirm it, this helmet-mounted mike and earphone should be nearly plug-and-play with Ham radios such as the Icom IC2AT/IC02AT, Alinco DJ-580T, Radio Shack HTX-202 and many other radios that all use the same interface for their speaker/mikes. No mention of PTT is

made, so some modification may be needed to add push-to-talk operation. The TalkAbout radios have a built-in VOX circuit.

Performance lists the X-Link VOX mike as item #00-3405A selling for \$29.99. Their web page is at <http://www.performancebike.com>. Presumably, other cycling suppliers will be selling these soon too.

### **Headset Fits Under Your Helmet...for Five Bucks!**

Here's another bike-mobile accessory that might save some money: If you have one of those headsets with the PTT switch and coil cord that is a separate unit with a headset that plugs into the PTT box with a three-conductor stereo mini-plug, you've probably noticed how uncomfortable it is to try to use the headset under a helmet. The headband just can't be made comfortable with the helmet pressing it into your head!

A cheap solution that will update your headset and solve the problem is available from Marlin P. Jones & Assoc. Their item # 8290-MK "Communication Headset" is an over-the-ear style earpiece and boom mike that will replace the old headset. No modifications are necessary, it just plugs into the PTT box in place of the old headset.

It looks like a headset that was designed for a cell-phone, but works fine as a replacement for the my original boom-mike headset. The best part is it only costs \$4.95. I bought two, expecting to have to modify them for use. I was pleasantly surprised when they fit the PTT switch unit and worked as-is. The plastic ear-hook is a bit cheesy. One of mine broke, but a better piece that could be custom-fitted to my own ear was easily fabricated out of a bit of stiff wire. The unit is so light, you almost don't need the ear-hook anyway. You can find Marlin P. Jones & Assoc. at <http://www.mjpa.com>, e-mail to [orders@mjpa.com](mailto:orders@mjpa.com) or 1-800-652-6733. They have no minimum order.

—Al Gritzmacher, AE2T

POB 730

Lockport, NY 14095

E-mail: [ae2t@bigfoot.com](mailto:ae2t@bigfoot.com)

### **Neat Idea for Commuter's Antenna**

This week I took a telescopic FM radio antenna and installed it on the bike as a quarter-wave 2m antenna. It tunes quite well on both 2m and 70 cm, and works not bad. It's no competition for the Diamond 770 I use when touring, but the advantage is I can keep it always installed on the bike without fear of damage, and, so far, it seems good enough for normal commuting communications.

—Teddy Neeman, 4Z5JQ

POB 65078

Tel Aviv 61650, Israel E-mail: [teddy@teledata.co.il](mailto:teddy@teledata.co.il)



—ADVENTURE CYCLING



## Ned's QSOs from Alaskan Highway

As reported in the April issue, Ned Mountain, WC4X, would be operating SSB from his bicycle as he rode the Alaska Highway Bicycle Tour. He planned to be on the air daily, 1900 to 2300Z, from June 5th to the 15th, mainly on the 17M band at 18.140 MHz, or thereabouts. Here's Ned's report, by E-mail:

Subj: Your Alaska Report

From: nedmt@compuserve.com (Ned Mountain)

To: Hartleya@aol.com

Radio operations from the bike from KL7 (Alaska) and VY1 (Yukon) were good and bad. Good, in that several neat contacts were made. Bad, in that propagation generally was very poor. The only band I made any contacts on was 17M, further convincing me that this is THE band for HF bicycle mobile. The following stations are in my log. All were from VY1 (Yukon) except the very first one.

K8TV Ohio	W4HZV VA
BV5GQ Taiwan	WB6GEI/VE7 B.C.
W8UWO OH	N0SCS ND
JA1JRK Tokyo	KC5ECB AR
TF/DL9YBY Iceland	K1XV NJ
N0NHM/O	WA5JC TX
N6CHR/O N. Dakota	W3PUY PA
W5RSK TX	W3PFB N. Mex.
N8CHB MI	W7DO WA
KA0GGI MO	

73's Ned Mountain, WC4X (Home QTH: Roswell, GA)

## Ned's Battle with NOISE

(Way back in April '93 Ned sent us his thoughts about his problems with static and other noises when operating bicycle-mobile. We thought you'd like to read it as a companion to his Alaska report. —ed.)

Bicycle-mobiling on HF, as you can imagine, presents its own set of very unique problems, including NOISE! For example, I once spent several months scratching my head over an intermittent noise that only starts when I go above 10 MPH and goes away with a slight pull on the front brake. This turned out to be a bicycle version of wheel bearing static that was cured by a very slight increase in the bearing tension.

Other sources of noise that drive the cyclist crazy are:  
>> Power Lines. Mobiling in your car, you usually drive through the most offensive noise sources rather quickly. On a bicycle, you spend much more time with the noise since you are traveling at only 1/4 the speed.

>> Electric Fences. Since most bicycling is done on lightly traveled rural roads, the electric fence QRM can be significant.

>> Passing Motor Vehicles. On those occasions where you are in a noise-free environment, Murphy will serve up an old Ford or some other offensive source of automobile ignition interference.

Seriously, operating HF from a bicycle is the most fun I have had in my 34 years as a ham, and based upon many of my contacts, there is surprising interest in the subject.

—Ned Mountain, WC4X

## CW NET REPORT

### BMHA Now has Net on 40 Meters....CW!

FREQ: 7042 MHz (plus 3)

TIME: 0200 UTC

DATE: Every Wednesday (Tues. evening in the US)

Jim Varner, AE6N, of Lake Havasu City, AZ is the founder and net control of this great idea. Jim writes:

Let's not have a formal cw net, since they take a fair amount of training. Let's just go with a calling frequency. For those new to nets, a calling frequency is a place on the band where hams "call in" to QSO with a friend or to call CQ. Starting at 0200 I'll call "CQ BMHA", and listen for check-ins, at regular intervals on 7042 for at least 45 minutes, my main job being to greet and log those who call in, and to make things go smoothly. Mike Nickolaus, NF0N, of S. Sioux City, NE, will fill in as assistant net control.

Time of the net. As you regular hams know, 0200 UTC Wednesday is of course Tuesday evening in the US—10pm Eastern, 9pm Midwest, 8pm Mountain, and 6pm Western—a convenient time for all our US members.

A calling frequency is a place on the dial where you park the receiver and listen to see if your friend is calling you. It's where you can call CQ and hope that a BMHA member will respond. If you two want to rag chew you QSY (move) off the frequency—that's standard on a calling freq.

A station who wants to check in (QNI) can just call CQ BMHA and any station on frequency can return his call. A third station can enter the QSO by sending BK. Courtesy is very important with this type of operation. Member stations should ID by sending "/BMHA" when calling other stations.

### Special Prize to BMHA CW Ops!

Every time you check into this net a slip with your call will be put in the hat and on Sept 15 a drawing will be held to determine the winner—watch the October issue. The prize is an MFJ HF/VHF SWR Analyzer, catalog # MFJ-259, list price \$239.95—(from *Worldradio Magazine* as a gift to BMHA upon our becoming an affiliated club.) See you on the air!

—Jim Varner, AE6N, Net Control, 2771 Barite Dr,  
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86404 E-mail: ae6n@ctaz.com

## MORE REMINDERS !

### BMHA Net....on 20

TIME: 2000 UTC and four hours later at 0000 UTC.

DATE: 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month.

FREQ: 14.253 — plus or minus the QRM.

Look for me, NF0N, at those times, and if I'm unable to call the net please look for those who have picked up the net when I've been out of town. In particular, look for Assistant Net Control John Liebenrood, K7RO. John covers the West, and I cover the middle.

—Mike Nickolaus, NF0N, BMHA 20M Net Control  
316 E. 32nd St., S. Sioux City, NE 68776

### Is Your E-mail Address Correct?

In a special mailing in the fall we'll be sending out the 1998-99 directories of BMHA members, and E-mail addresses. Please make sure that your listings are up to date. Send info to BMHA, POB 4009, Boulder CO, 80306, or hartleya@aol.com.

# NEW MEMBERS

*We're pleased to add these names to our Membership List:*

J R Anderson, KF6FQI, POB 327, Whitethorn CA 95589  
Bill Boose, N3W8T, 26 Middle Creek Rd, Lititz PA 17543  
Dale Bower, KE0RJ, 25225 478th Av, Garretson SD 57030  
Mark Campbell, KE0CK, 2110 40 St, Des Moines IA 50310  
R Craig Cook, N3BQR, 107 Bay Park Way, Severna Park MD 21146  
John Cumming, VE3JC, 182 Wellington, Delaware, Ont, NOL 1E0 Canada  
Ed Curtin, WT8N, 80 Essex Rd, Elk Grove IL 60007  
Speed Gray, K8SG, 1260 Troon C7 SE, Grand Rapids MI 49546  
Carl Jensen, KF8LBM, 1320 N St #207, Sacramento CA 95814  
John Kerr, N8JK, 9136 Rad Cedar, West Chester OH 45069

Tom Kocielski, KC2CAG, 19 Pawtucket Row, Orchard Park NY 14127  
Eric Krohn, KC0CAV, 8630 S Washington St, Littleton CO 80121  
Daniel Krohn, KC0CEN, 8630 S Washington St, Littleton CO 80121  
Philip J Kroth, KA2QK, 146-C Kenville Rd, Buffalo NY 14215  
Craig Lyles, KC7UXM, 10330 Gateway N #4F, El Paso TX 79924  
Richard M Myers, K8RM, 5038 Lansdowne Dr, Solon OH 44139  
Lou Raso, K6YOC, 10363 Red Fir Rd, Truckee CA 96161  
John Reeves, WD8JLV, 1471 Judd Rd, Saline MI 48176  
David Ritzenthaler, KC7NFZ, 1650 NE Valley Rd, Pullman WA 99163  
Chuck Rush, N0AZ, 3009 S 87th St, Omaha NE 68124

Gale Scholten, N8GS, 549 Ottawa Av NW, Grand Rapids MI 49503  
Charles Schroth, WL7CSJ, POB 3, Gustavus AK 99826  
Joe Shalley, KF4UKV, 3704 39th St. N., St Petersburg FL 33713  
Mitchel Stachowsky, KA7OGK, 18205 Edwards Shop Rd, Elkwood VA 22718  
John K Stimpson, KC7WJJ, POB 1203, Friday Harbor WA 98250  
Lerry E White, KC7KDZ, 7261 S 35th St, Lincoln NE 68516  
Thomson Williams, KF4LQX, 2001 Galby Rd #0-6, College Park GA 30349  
Ed Wilson, N2XDD, 10 Glen Hollow Dr #C53, Holtsville NY 11742  
Dean Wiedler, ex-KN9DIA, 1328 Wood Mill Dr, Springfield IL 62704  
Andrew R Young, 12555 Lantern Rd, Fishers IN 46038

*With traditional ham friendliness, make contact with these new members, welcome them to BMHA, and help them with any problems they might have.*

## REMINDERS

### Back Issues Still Available

You may purchase any of the twenty nine back issues of the BMHA NewsLetter for \$1.50 each, postpaid. For info on the contents of the various issues send a business-size SASE to: BMHA, POB 4009, Boulder CO 80306-4009, and ask for the Index of Back Issues. This service available to members only.

If you tell us your bike tour plans we'll publish them in the NewsLetter and help make it possible for you to meet fellow BMMHAers in person or on radio as you pedal along. Just send in your route and the dates.

When you write a plug for BMHA (and please do!) in your local club's newsletter, be sure to include this information: "The annual dues is \$10. To receive a sample copy of the BMHA NewsLetter and other bike-mobile info send an SASE to BMHA, Box 4009-RC, Boulder CO 80306." This will save our club a lot of trouble and expense. The info will be sent next day.

## BMHA NEWSLETTER

**Editor:** Hartley Alley, NA0A

**Associate Editor:** Skip LaFetra, AA6WK  
**Assistant Editor:** Bil Paul, KD6JUI

**Design:** Jean Alley, N0EOX

### Board of Advisors:

Russell Dwarshuis, KB8U Len Koppl, KD0RC  
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We welcome articles, suggestions, letters, announcements, photos, artwork -- anything pertaining to bicycling while operating an amateur radio, or vice versa.

The BMHA is affiliated with Adventure Cycling Assoc., League of American Bicyclists (LAB), and Worldradio.

Phone: 303-494-6559 E-mail: hartleyal@aol.com  
BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA (BMHA)  
Box 4009, Boulder, CO 80306-4009  
Web site: [www.ragbrai.org/bmha/bmha.html](http://www.ragbrai.org/bmha/bmha.html)



## ABOUT BMHA

### For the information of our first-time readers

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America got its start when a 'Stray' in the June '89 QST magazine asked to "get in touch with hams who operate their radios while bicycle-mobile", signed by Hartley Alley, NA0A. Twenty five hams responded, filled out questionnaires, and received a summary of the collected data.

In April of '90 we had our first BMHA Forum at the Dayton HamVention. We played to a packed house, overflowed the room, and added 54 names to our mailing list. Our eight subsequent forums have drawn increasingly larger audiences, and now BMHA is firmly established as a 'regular' at this world-renowned event.

This is the thirty second issue of our quarterly newsletter, which has become the clearing house for the exchange of info and ideas for the hams who go on the air from their bicycles. Since the last issue of this newsletter we have added 30 new members. The total membership now stands at 463, with members in 45 states, and six countries. BMHA is affiliated with Adventure Cycling Association, the League of American Bicyclists (LAB), and Worldradio.

BMHA membership puts you in touch with a friendly and helpful group of bike-riding hams. You'll make contacts through our membership directory and E-mail address list, regular HF nets on 20 and 40 meters, annual meeting and Forum at the Dayton HamVention and other regional meetings, and of course through the BMHA NewsLetter, which has articles on bike trips, antennas, other gear, operating tips, etc. Membership application blank on the next to last page.

# GETTING STARTED

## HF Antennas for the Bicycle Ham

Most beginning bicycle hams operate with HT's—the hand-held walkie-talkie-style transceivers which require a no-code FCC license. They operate generally at frequencies of 144 megahertz and above, and often use repeaters to talk within, say, a 10-30 mile range. In a recent column, though (Oct. 1997), I introduced you to the HF (high frequency) world of 1-30 megahertz where if your skills and equipment (and atmospheric conditions) are good you can talk to the world.

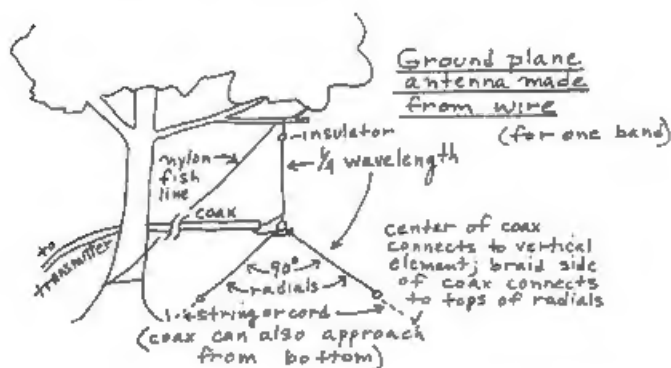
Most of us operating on bike trips, though, are plenty happy to have contacts in plain old North America. After you have some equipment for sending HF morse code or voice signals, and the proper FCC license, the real challenge on bike trips is to put up decent antennas.

If you bicycle tour as I do, you're only staying in any one campground overnight, so a prerequisite for an antenna is easy-up and easy-down. To have the other people you're touring with waiting...and waiting...to take off in the cool of the morning while you take down a complicated antenna and roll it up etc. can fry one's nerves!

Here are some antenna options:

### Ground Plane Antenna made from Wire (see drawing).

The first antenna I used for touring. Needs a tree or other high support to hang it from. Has one vertical element fed from the center conductor of a 50-ohm coax line and one or more radials sloping down toward the ground which are connected to the braid side of the coax.



Puts out a very nice signal toward the horizon—I've worked DX with this antenna, using four radials. **Advantages:** light, simple, cheap, doesn't require antenna tuner and needs only a short feed line. **Disadvantages:** one band only, needs a high support, and is non-directional.

### Bike-mounted Short Vertical Antenna

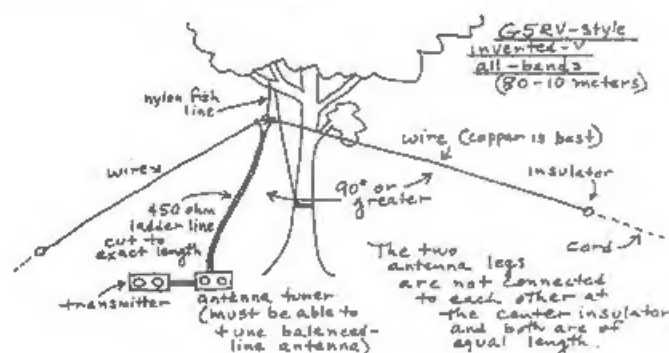
A cheap and fairly effective one-band antenna is a 6-foot-long Hamstick (\$20) sold by Lakeview Co. (which also sells the mounting hardware). They are at 3620 Whitehall Rd in Anderson, SC 29624 (864-226-6990) and they have Hamsticks for all the HF ham bands. The bottom half of the Hamstick is the loading coil and the top is the bendable whip (the two are easily separated for travel). The center of the 50-ohm coax feed

connects to the Hamstick while the braid side of the coax is connected to the frame of the bike to serve as a ground plane. When you order one, specify whether you want the antenna to match the morse code or voice part of a band. **Advantages:** no support required other than bike, can be used while bike is in motion, doesn't need an antenna tuner, and requires little feed line. **Disadvantages:** doesn't put out a great signal because it's short and low, is for one band only, and is non-directional.

Note: some other manufacturers sell multi-band short vertical antennas but they tend to be expensive.

### G5RV-type Inverted-V Multi-band Dipole (see drawing).

This is the antenna I'm presently using on bike tours. This antenna covers the ham bands between 3 and 30 megahertz and still only requires one high support point.



I use insulated, multi-strand copper wire for the two legs (which should have at least a 90 degree angle between them) and 450-ohm ladder line as the feed line. **Advantages:** cheap, simple, puts out good signal, directional, and is multi-band. **Disadvantages:** requires high support and tie-down of legs, is fairly long, takes longer to unpack and pack, the wide ladderline takes up storage space, and it needs an antenna tuner. (This antenna is described in detail as "The Suburban Multibander" in American Radio Relay League's Antenna Compendium, Vol. 2.)

### Random-length Antenna

Finally, and I find myself using this ultra-simple antenna more and more: there's the random-length wire antenna. Basically, you throw one end of a long wire (the longer the better) up in a distant tree and bring the other end over to your antenna tuner (which must be able to handle a single-wire end-fed antenna). You should have your rig attached to a good ground (a water pipe or rod stuck in the ground). You should bring an extra length of wire, say 5' or 10' to clip on if the wire isn't tunable at your desired frequency. **Advantages:** simple, cheap, directional, easily replaceable, has no feed line, and packs up easily. **Disadvantages:** needs high support and ground, needs antenna tuner, may not load on all bands without changing length, and doesn't put out the best signal (unless very, very long and quite high). A variation is the random-length loop fed directly from an antenna tuner's balanced line output (i.e., no feed line), with one or two high supports.

### Hanging it in a Tree

There is that old challenge of hanging an antenna. Advice: always look for campgrounds with tall trees! A dead tall tree without foliage is even better. I use a slingshot to shoot a lead fishing weight up over a high tree branch. Attached to the

weight is strong 20-lb nylon fishing line (don't use cord of any kind—use the slippery fishing line). I just lay the fishing line on the ground in even lines, making sure it doesn't cross over itself anywhere. When putting the weight in the slingshot and pulling back, don't hold the weight, hold the leather pouch. Other people use fishing reels to hold the line or some sort of coiled arrangement so the don't have to lay the line on the ground. Maybe this year I'll get around to improving this part of the operation... In any case, you get pretty good at hitting the right branch after awhile.

I'm building a single sideband (SSB) voice transceiver for 75 and 20 meters to take on this year's tour. It's a kit put out by the low power (QRP) ham club I belong to.

If you want more details on any one of these antennas, such as actual lengths for a particular band, write me or e-mail me at either of the addresses below.

—Bil Paul, KD6JUI

PO Box 1275

Belmont, CA 94002 E-mail: bbp@alchemist-light.com

## WORTHY WEBSITES

### Attention, All Members on Internet Volunteers needed!

Here's a website that really gives out the information that we bike riders really need. Try this one:  
<<http://members.aol.com/azbikeclub/arizona.html>>

It lists almost all the local bike clubs in Arizona, and lists all their ride schedules. In addition it gives info on cycling on Interstates in AZ, state laws concerning cycling, etc., etc.

There must be other websites out there that give similar information for other states. We need a volunteer to search the net and come up with a list of these websites. If there are enough of these helpful URLs we can start a column called something like WORTHY WEBS and list them regularly in the BMHA NewsLetter. If you'd like to do this just send an E-mail to Hartley Alley, NAOA, at [hartleya@aol.com](mailto:hartleya@aol.com).

Any volunteers out there?

## Membership Application

MemAPLA.wpa 8/17/97 lpc /newmem lpc /E-mail /newHAM /NONham /news IO's /rest /walc /new

**BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA**  
Box 4009, Boulder, CO 80306-4009

Individual \$10

(US or Canada)

Family \$15

(limit: two persons)

new member?

renewal?

Foreign \$15

Donation \$

Make check payable to BMHA, in US dollars or international money order.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ License Class \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Most miles bicycled in one day \_\_\_\_\_

## TRAVEL TIPS

### Logistics, Logistics! ....the UPS Option

If you have toured, you have had the problem! How do I get my touring bike to the starting point and back. No problem if you start and finish at home, or if you can drive to the start/finish point. But what if your starting and finishing points are different? There is always the train, plane or bus option with various fees and requirements.

My brother and I are riding our bicycles across the United States each summer, two weeks at-a-time, via Adventure Cycling Association's bicycle routes. We cover about 700 miles each summer and divert from the backroads route only to start and finish at a major airport. We prefer not to be hassled by flying with our cartoned bicycles, as this entails getting them from home to (and from) the airport, worrying about what condition they will arrive in, and whether or not a carton will be available on the return leg.

Our solution was to purchase "The BIKE BOX" ([www/bike/box.com](http://www/bike/box.com)), which meets UPS standards. Using our BIKE BOXES and good old UPS, we ship our bicycles to the start motel, always with prior arrangements and reservations. From there, we ship the empty cartons with our assembly/disassembly tools to our final motel, and at ride's end we ship the bicycles home.

From experience, the primary advantage to using UPS is convenience and not cost. The UPS charges are nominal compared to the typical charge of around \$45 each way by the airline. However, The BIKE BOX (which sells for \$69.95 plus \$14.95 freight) has a limited life of two to three round-trip cycles, at least in our experience. Another cardboard bike box meeting UPS standards is by Crate Works ([www.bikeroute.com/CrateWorks](http://www.bikeroute.com/CrateWorks)) which advertises "Tougher Bicycle Boxes under \$200".

An excellent detailed analysis of all of the alternatives can be found under "Transportation Tips" in "The Cyclists Yellow Pages" published by Adventure Cycling Association ([www.adv-cycling.org](http://www.adv-cycling.org)).

—Lee Cooper

3706 Gull Way

Fort Collins CO 80525

### BMHA's Official Logo

The next time you need to order new QSL cards, don't forget to include the BMHA logo in your design. Here's the official logo, as designed by Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U.

BICYCLE MOBILE



HAMS OF AMERICA

BICYCLE MOBILE



HAMS OF AMERICA



# **BMHA NEWSLETTER**

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America  
PO Box 4009  
Boulder, CO 80306-4009

## **First Class Mail**

## **COMMENTS**

....Since my last e-mail, a lot has happened to me, including a dislocated shoulder at Slick Rock at Moab, being stopped by the law at 11 at night just north of the Four Corners area in the middle of a police-killer manhunt, driving through two cattle drives, seeing a herd of camels, and in Nevada having my mountain bike on top of the car attacked by a bald eagle.

----Bill Sharp, W8HI, Colleyville, TX

....Sounds like a very fascinating group! Please send me your newsletter, etc. I am an avid long distance cyclist and relatively new to amateur radio.

----John Stimpson, KC7WJJ, Friday Harbor, WA

....(His answer to BMHA Questionnaire: "Your most exciting misfortune, while bicycling?") When I was young we were riding 3-persons on a bicycle and a cop pulled us over and gave us all a ticket.

----Joe Shalley, KF4LKV, St. Petersburg, FL

....I read your ad in Feb QST and would be interested in joining your organization. I have been active on 40, 20, 15, 10, 6, 2, 440, as a mobile both from a sailboat and bicycle for many years. Since I am 72 yrs old now, my activities are somewhat limited, but I still enjoy riding the 33-mile trail that starts a few blocks from my house.

Please send me info on joining as well as net freqs and times. I enclose a SASE for your reply.

---John Chamberlain, W2NK, Tarpon Springs, FL

....Awesome newsletter! Using its directions I made the HT holder. Works like a champ with my new throat mike and Icom T7A. I love biking and hamming. I've ridden the coast of Oregon and many other shorter trips.

---Dave Ritzenthaler, KC7NFZ, Pullman, WA

....After a few years of light bicycle hamming, I joined BMHA just last year. I'm learning a lot, connecting with good people, getting a lot for the money. I'm a New Jersey kid. Moved west in 1977. My 6 call is from San Diego in October, 1990. Moved back east in 1992.

I used to think multiple-day rides were for supermen, as were the century rides. Now a 100 is just a good day's ride. When I lived in San Diego, one of my dreams was to stuff the bike in a little airplane and fly to Iowa for RAGBRAI.

Do you ride long bike tours? Try BRAG (Bicycle Ride Across Georgia). A week in mid-June, 60-mile days, and a 100 option in mid-week. Lots of scenery, visits to small-town Georgia, riders from tots in trailers to octogenarians. BRAG is my mission, and I enjoy the heck out of it. (Phil is the Communications Director for BRAG ---ed.)

---Phil Milazzo, KC6OEI, Marietta, GA